

SENATE FISH AND GAME  
EXHIBIT NO. 5  
DATE March 24, 2009  
BILL NO. HB 218

House Bill 218  
March 24, 2009  
Presented by Jim Kropp  
Senate Fish and Game Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Jim Kropp, Chief of Law Enforcement of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

I stand before you today to speak on behalf of HB 218. This bill does two things: First, it clarifies prohibitions on the use of artificial light used when hunting. Second, it further clarifies the unlawful waste of a fur-bearing animal.

Historically, spotlights were commonly used for illegal night hunting. Over the years, other methods utilizing artificial light have also become more common to illegally take animals at night. Courts have questioned whether using such things as vehicle headlights to spot game really constitutes "spotlights." This revision puts the use of any form artificial light under the same category and therefore, eliminates the potential for those who use other means to illegally take animals to elude conviction.

Secondly, the current laws pertaining to the waste of a fur-bearing animal are limited in scope to those who waste furbearer pelts by either failing to check traps or pick them up at the close of the season. FWP has also encountered problems in prosecuting people for the negligent waste of fur based upon the individual failing to skin or care for the furbearing animal lawfully trapped. This bill serves to clarify that purposely or knowingly wasting a furbearer (pelt) constitutes a violation under Montana statutes.

We support this bill and urge its passage. Thank you.